



DIOCESE of  
PARRAMATTA

# MEDIA RELEASE

17 October 2023

## **Diocese of Parramatta concludes its first-ever Synod: a model for engagement, discernment and decision-making**

Over the weekend of 13 – 15 October 2023, the Diocese of Parramatta successfully concluded its inaugural Synod, a momentous event that brought together 280 faithful from across Western Sydney, the Blue Mountains, and beyond to discuss the future of the local Church.

The culmination of over six months of listening and consultation sessions, the Synod was a gathering of 200 selected Members to discuss, discern, and vote on 25 resolutions under the six key themes that were raised as part of the consultation sessions. Over 5,000 people were part of this process and over 1,000 submissions were generated. A Synod Writing Group synthesised all these experiences and information into a [Synod Working Document](#), under the theme: “Behold, I am doing a new thing (Isaiah 43:19).”

The six themes were:

1. An Inclusive and Welcoming Church
2. A Humble and Healing Church
3. A Listening Church
4. A Church Renewed in Spirit and Prayer
5. A Church that Reaches to the Margins
6. A Church Walking Together

Joining the 200 Members were 12 Observers representing various Catholic and Christian organisations to provide oversight and validate the proceedings, along with several “Periti” – experts in theology and canon law, as well as many staff and volunteers.

Commencing on Friday evening with an Opening Mass and Commissioning of Delegates at St Patrick’s Cathedral and then moving to CommBank Stadium Parramatta, Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta welcomed all as “not passive congregants but protagonists and subjects of evangelisation.”

Throughout the weekend, members were placed in small groups where they took turns to provide their perspectives, listen actively to others, reflect in silence, and then discuss what they heard from others. This method of spiritual conversations was derived from Ignatian Spirituality and not only gave the event a productive structure but allowed for an opening up and honesty from all participants.

Members then had the ability to speak from the floor, with many lining up to speak on behalf of their tables or of their own experiences.

Facilitated by Professor Br David Hall FMS and Dr Trish Hindmarsh, each session concluded with voting on the resolutions. Twenty-three of the 25 resolutions received the required two-thirds majority, with one resolution revisited and gaining enough votes to pass.

Elizabeth Stone, General Secretary, National Council of Churches in Australia gave closing remarks on behalf of the Observers.



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“We've had a privileged opportunity to be called to be part of this process. And it's been a time of personal enrichment. We've all felt that. We've been growing with you. We found this was a very welcoming space, in fact, a safe space. Everyone coming here knew there'd be tension, but fundamentally, there was respect. And we found you engaged in a very inclusive dialogue.”

Bishop Vincent Long concluded the historic event.

“This synod has been much more than an event. It is a template and a model for engagement, discernment and decision-making process. More than a destination that says we have arrived, it is a journey of ongoing learning, openness and alignment with the Spirit. So as we conclude, we feel energised to begin again. May we go forth into our various environments and become agents of synodality, enabling our families, schools, parishes, agencies to become a community of mutual empowerment.”

For more information about the event including live updates, please visit: <https://catholicoutlook.org>  
All photos from the event are [found here](#).  
Videos from the [event are here](#).

-ENDS-

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**About the Diocese of Parramatta**

The Diocese of Parramatta is the Catholic Church in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains and is home to over 320,000 Catholics with 47 parishes and churches. The Diocese educates more than 43,000 students across its 80 schools, employs more than 5,500 people and cares for thousands of people in need through its social services arm, Catholic Care.

Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv was appointed the fourth Bishop of Parramatta in 2016. He is Australia's first Asian-born Bishop, and the first Vietnamese-born Bishop to lead a Catholic Diocese outside of Vietnam. You can read more about [him here](#).